

an output switch coupled to the interface control module and the speech-to-text routing switch for receiving speech from the speech-to-text routing switch for receiving a control input from the interface control module, and for forwarding speech from the speech-to-text routing switch to the user telephone; and

a text-to-speech converter coupled to the output switch for receiving text from the interface control module, converting the text to speech, and forwarding the speech to the output switch to deliver speech to the user telephone.

6. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the user telephone is a mobile telephone.

7. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the input converter comprises a speech-to-command converter.

8. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the input converter comprises a tone-to-command converter.

9. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the interface control module integrates the data from the information system periodically or manually under user control, the interface control module further comprising:

- means for retrieving data from the information systems;
- means for determining antecedent comparable relevance of the data;
- means for updating all of the data to reflect the most recent data;
- means for linking relevant data; and
- means for exporting the linked data to the information system.

10. The universal interface of claim 9, wherein the information systems comprise two or more of the following:

- a calendar;
- a to-do list;
- an address book;

voice mail;
e-mail; and
a web site.

11. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the interface control module integrates and synchronizes (i) a database of a personal information manager, (ii) a database residing on a personal digital assistant, and (iii) a database residing in the universal interface, the universal interface coupled to a computer on which the personal information database resides, wherein a computer further comprises:

- a first input terminal for receiving data from the personal digital assistant;
- a second input terminal for receiving data from the universal interface;
- a sensor for detecting a synchronization event triggered by a user requesting synchronization of the database of the personal digital assistant with the database of the personal information manager;
- an electronic mail system coupled to the Internet; and
- control logic coupled to receive the synchronized event from the sensor and to transmit data, over the electronic mail system, to the interface control module, wherein the control logic updates the data in each of the databases to reflect the most recent data entered into any database.

12. The universal interface of claim 11, wherein the synchronization information is sent to the universal interface in its entirety, in compressed form, or in incremental form.

13. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the data sent from the information system to the universal interface is sent over the Internet.

14. The universal interface of claim 13, wherein the data sent is encrypted.

15. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the output switch further comprises:
a detector for determining whether the speech from the speech-to-text routing switch is digital or analog;

- a sound card coupled to the detector to receive digital data;

a first speech routing switch for receiving a control input from the detector, and speech from the detector or speech from the sound card;

a second speech routing switch for receiving the control input from the interface control module and speech from the first speech routing switch or speech from the text-to-speech converter, the second speech routing switch forwarding speech to the user telephone.

16. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the information system comprises at least one of: a dual tone multiple frequency (DTMF) driven voice mail system, a voice driven voice mail system, an electronic mail system, a web site, and a personal information manager.

17. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the system determines one of the following:

- whether the voice commands are being received from a user telephone;
- the information system to be accessed;
- whether the voice commands, after being converted to commands, are recognizable to the information system;
- whether the converted commands have been forwarded to the information system;
- whether data has been received from the information system;
- whether data from the information system is speech or text;
- the state of the speech-to-text routing switch; and
- the state of the output switch.

18. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the interface control module further comprises:

- a model for converting commands from the telephone into commands recognizable by the information system; and

- a translator coupled to the input converter for retrieving the model corresponding to the information system to be accessed and for converting the commands to commands recognizable by the information system.

19. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the universal interface further comprises:

means coupled to the input converter for signaling that the user telephone has received unintelligible words;

means for restarting communication to the text-to-speech converter at a point a specified number of words back from the point at which the communication ceased;

means for forwarding the first specified number of words by spelling the words out; and

means for continuing forwarding the data after the specific number of words.

20. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the universal interface further comprises:

means for detecting a first language in which the commands from the user telephone are received;

means for detecting a second language associated with the data received from the information system; and

means for converting the data from the information system into the first language.

21. The universal interface of claim 20, wherein the universal interface further comprises means for detecting more than one languages within a single fragment of data.

22. The universal interface of claim 5, further comprising a resource manager for establishing conference bridges to an external telephone having a telephone number, wherein:

the interface control module detects, from the commands from the input converter, whether a conference bridge request has been made;

the interface control module retrieves the telephone number of the external telephone to establish the conference bridge;

the interface control module forwards the telephone number to the resource manager; and

the resource manager establishes a telephone connection with the external telephone.

23. The universal interface of claim 5, further comprising a facsimile manager for sending facsimiles to one or more facsimile machines, wherein:

the interface control module detects, from the commands from the input converter, whether a facsimile request has been made;

the interface control module retrieves a telephone number of a designated facsimile machine;

the interface control module forwards the data and the telephone number to the facsimile manager; and

the facsimile manager faxes the data to the designated facsimile machine.

24. The universal interface of claim 5, wherein the universal interface further comprises a pager manager for sending pager messages to one or more pagers, wherein:

the interface control module detects, from the commands from the input converter, whether a pager request has been made;

the interface control module retrieves data to be forwarded to the pager;

the interface control module retrieves a telephone number of a designated pager to which the data is to be forwarded;

the interface control module forwards the data and the telephone number to the pager manager; and

the pager manager forwards the data to the designated pager.

25. A universal interface for accessing data from one or more information systems comprising:

an input converter for receiving inputs from the user telephone and converting the inputs into commands;

an interface control module coupled to the input converter comprising:

means for periodically requesting data from the information systems;

means for retrieving data from the information system;

means for detecting the form of data from the information system;

means for converting the data that is speech to commands;
means for storing the data for later access by a user telephone; and
means for storing information representing a current state of the system; and

further comprising:

means for receiving commands from the input converter and means for detecting which of said stored information is sought to be accessed;

a text-to-speech converter coupled to the interface control module for receiving said requested stored text from the interface control module, converting the text to speech, and forwarding the speech to the user telephone.

26. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the user telephone is a mobile telephone.

27. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the input converter comprises a speech-to-command converter.

28. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the input converter comprises a tone-to-command converter.

29. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the interface control module integrates the data from the information system periodically or manually under user control, the interface control module further comprising:

means for retrieving data from the information systems;
means for determining antecedent comparable relevance of the data;
means for updating all of the data to reflect the most recent data;
means for linking relevant data; and
means for exporting the linked data to the information system.

30. The universal interface of claim 29, wherein the information systems comprise two or more of the following:

a calendar;

a to-do list;
an address book;
voice mail;
e-mail; and
a web site.

31. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the interface control module integrates and synchronizes (i) a database of a personal information manager, (ii) a database of a personal digital assistant, and (iii) a database residing in the universal interface, the universal interface coupled to a computer on which the personal information database resides, said computer comprising:

a first input terminal for receiving data from the personal digital assistant;
a second input terminal for receiving data from the universal interface;
a sensor for detecting a synchronization event, wherein the event is triggered by a user requesting synchronization of the database of the personal digital assistant with the database of a personal information manager;
an electronic mail system coupled to the Internet; and
control logic coupled to receive detection information from the sensor and to transmit data, via the electronic mail system, to the interface control module, wherein the control logic updates the data in each of the databases to reflect the most recent data entered into any one database.

32. The universal interface of claim 31, wherein the synchronization information is sent to the universal interface in its entirety, in compressed form, or in incremental form.

33. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the data sent from the information system to the universal interface is sent over the Internet.

34. The universal interface of claim 33, wherein the data sent over the Internet is encrypted.

35. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the information system comprises at least one of: a dual tone multiple frequency (DTMF) driven voice mail system, a voice driven voice mail system, an electronic mail system, a web site, and a personal information manager.

36. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the system determines one of the following:

- whether the voice commands are being received from a user telephone;
- the information system to be accessed;
- whether the voice commands, after being converted to commands, are recognizable to the information system;
- whether the converted commands have been forwarded to the information system;
- whether data has been received from the information system;
- whether data from the information system is speech or text;
- the state of the speech-to-text routing switch; and
- the state of the output switch.

37. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the interface control module further comprises:

- one or more models containing commands recognizable by the information system;
- control logic for accessing the model that corresponds with the information system to be accessed, converting control commands to commands recognizable by the information system, and forwarding the converted commands to the information system.

38. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the universal interface further comprises:

- means coupled to the input converter for signaling that the user telephone has received unintelligible words;
- means for restarting communication to the text-to-speech converter at a point a specified number of words back from the point at which the communication ceased;
- means for forwarding the first specified number of words by spelling the words out; and

means for continuing forwarding the data after the specific number of words.

39. The universal interface of claim 25, wherein the universal interface further comprises:

means for detecting a first language in which the commands from the user telephone are received;

means for detecting a second language associated with the data received from the information system; and

means for converting the data from the information system into the first language.

40. The universal interface of claim 39, wherein the universal interface further comprises means for detecting more than one language within a single fragment of data.

47. (Amended) A method for providing data from one or more information systems to a user telephone, comprising the steps of:

converting speech from the user telephone to text;

determining the information system to be accessed;

converting the text to commands recognizable by the information system;

forwarding the converted commands to the information system;

receiving data from the information system;

detecting the form of the data from the information system;

converting non-speech data from the information system into speech;

forwarding the speech data to the user telephone;

storing information relating to the current state of the system; and

integrating and synchronizing (i) a database of a personal information manager, (ii) a database of a personal digital assistant, and (iii) a database residing in a universal interface, by:

receiving data from the personal digital assistant;

receiving data from the universal interface;

detecting a synchronization event, wherein the event is triggered by a request for synchronization of the database of the personal digital assistant with the database of a personal information manager;

transmitting data, via an electronic mail system, to the interface control module;
and

updating the data in each of the databases to reflect the most recent data entered into any one database.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein the synchronization information is sent to the universal interface either in its entirety, in compressed form, or in incremental form.

49. (Amended) The method of claim 48, further comprising sending the data from the information system to the universal interface over the Internet.

50. The method of claim 49, further comprising encrypting the data from the information system before sending the encrypted data over the Internet.

52. (Amended) A method for providing data from one or more information systems to a user telephone, comprising the steps of:

converting speech from the user telephone to commands;
determining the information system to be accessed;
converting the text to commands recognizable by the information system;
forwarding the converted commands to the information system;
receiving data from the information system;
detecting the form of the data from the information system;
converting non-speech data from the information system into speech;
forwarding the speech data to the user telephone; and
storing information relating to the current state of the system, wherein storing information relating to the current state of the system further comprises the steps of determining:
whether the voice commands are being received from a user telephone;

the information system to be accessed;
whether the voice commands, after being converted to text, have been converted into commands recognizable by the information system;
whether the converted commands have been forwarded to the information system;
whether data has been received from the information system;
whether data from the information system is speech or text;
the state of the speech-to-text routing switch; and
the state of the output switch.

54. (Amended) A method for providing data from one or more information systems to a user telephone, comprising the steps of:

converting speech from the user telephone to commands;
determining the information system to be accessed;
converting the text to commands recognizable by the information system;
forwarding the converted commands to the information system;
receiving data from the information system;
detecting the form of the data from the information system;
converting non-speech data from the information system into speech;
forwarding the speech data to the user telephone;
storing information relating to the current state of the system;
receiving a command from the user telephone signaling that the user telephone has received unintelligible words;
ceasing communication to the user telephone;
restarting communication to the user telephone at a point a specified number of words back from the point at which the communication ceased;
forwarding the first specified number of words by spelling the words out; and
continuing to forward the remainder of the data.